

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14, 26 and 27 were rejected. By the present Response, claims 1, 7, 13, 26 and 27 have been amended. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14, 26 and 27 will remain pending in the present patent application. Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Goiny (U.S. Pat. No. 4,969,788). By this response, claims 1, 7, 13, and 26 have been amended. For the reasons provided below, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14 and 26 are not anticipated because the Goiny reference does not disclose all of the recited features of the claims.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-6

Some of the recited features of amended independent claim 1 that are not disclosed by the Goiny reference are: “a standoff portion integral with the washer portion and configured to extend substantially through material of a defined thickness.” The Goiny reference discloses a nut 20 with a pressure ring 22. *See* Goiny, column 4, lines 3-5. The pressure ring 22 has a spherically shaped underside 14 that distributes clamping forces induced by the nut to a complementary shaped depression 16 that is pre-fabricated into a component 6 to be assembled. *See* Goiny, column 3, lines 39-50. As can be seen in the figures of the Goiny reference, the spherically shaped underside 14 of the Goiny reference does not extend substantially through component 6. *See* Goiny, Figures 1-3. Thus, the Goiny reference does not disclose: “a standoff portion integral with the washer portion and configured to extend *substantially through* material of a defined thickness.” Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose each and every feature of amended claim 1. Accordingly, amended independent claim 1 and claims 2 and 4-6, which depend therefrom, are not anticipated by the Goiny reference.

Claims 7-9, 11, and 12

Some of the recited features of amended independent claim 7 that are not disclosed by the Goiny reference are a standoff portion: “wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit displacement of a threaded fastener securable to the threaded nut relative to the washer portion.” The Goiny reference discloses a nut 20, which is threadable onto a bolt 4 and a pressure ring 22 that transmits the force generated by the nut 10 onto a component 6. *See* Goiny, col. 3, lines 40-43 and col. 4, line 3. The pressure ring 22 has a circumferential flange 29. *See* Goiny, col. 4, lines 3-5. The pressure ring 22 also has a spherically shaped underside 14 that is adapted to contact a complementary shaped depression 16 pre-fabricated into component 6 as the nut 20 is tightened onto bolt 4. *See* Goiny, col. 3, lines 43-46. However, the spherically shaped underside 14 of the pressure ring 22 is not adapted to limit displacement of the bolt 4 relative to the circumferential flange 29. Thus, the Goiny reference does not disclose a standoff portion: “wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit displacement of a threaded fastener securable to the threaded nut relative to the washer portion.” Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose each and every feature of amended claim 7. Accordingly, amended independent claim 1 and claims 8, 9, 11, and 12, which depend therefrom, are not anticipated by the Goiny reference.

Claims 13 and 14

Some of the recited features of amended independent claim 13 that are not disclosed by the Goiny reference are: “a standoff portion adapted to extend from the washer portion substantially through material of a defined thickness to limit displacement of the externally threaded fastener relative to the washer portion.” As discussed above, the spherically shaped underside 14 of the pressure ring 22 of the Goiny reference does not extend through component 6, nor does the spherically shaped underside 14 of the pressure ring 22 limit displacement of the bolt 4 relative to the nut 20. Rather, the Goiny reference, at best, discloses a pressure ring 14 that extends merely part way through a material 6. *See* Goiny, Figs. 1-3. Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose “a

standoff portion adapted to extend from the washer portion substantially through material of a defined thickness to limit displacement of the externally threaded fastener relative to the washer portion.” Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose each and every feature of amended claim 13. Accordingly, amended independent claim 13 and claim 14, which depends therefrom, are not anticipated by the Goiny reference.

Claim 26

Some of the recited features of amended independent claim 26 that are not disclosed by the Goiny reference are a standoff portion: “wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit relative displacement of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer to minimize compression of a material disposed therebetween.” As discussed above, the pressure ring 22 of the Goiny reference has a circumferential flange 29. The pressure ring 22 of the Goiny reference also has a spherically shaped underside 14 that contacts a complementary shaped depression 16 pre-fabricated into component 6 as nut 20 is tightened to bolt 4. Thus, not only does the spherically shaped underside 14 of pressure ring 22 not limit relative displacement of bolt 4 relative to circumferential flange 29, but the spherically shaped underside 14 actually maximizes compression of component 6, not minimizes it. Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose a standoff portion: “wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit relative displacement of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer to minimize compression of a material disposed therebetween.” Accordingly, amended independent claim 26 is not anticipated by the Goiny reference.

For all of these reasons, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14, and 26 are not anticipated by the Goiny reference. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14, and 26 are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goiny in view of McKinlay (U.S. Pat. No. 5,688,091). Independent claim 27 has been amended by this response. Claim 27 is patentable over the cited references because the cited references, either alone or in combination, do not teach, suggest, or disclose all of the recited features of the claim.

Some of the recited features of amended independent claim 27 that are not taught, suggested, or disclosed by the cited references, either alone or in combination, are: “a compressible substrate joined between the standoff portion and the head of the externally threaded fastener, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit compression of the substrate between the head of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer.” As discussed above, the pressure ring 22 of the Goiny reference has a circumferential flange 29. The pressure ring 22 of the Goiny reference also has a spherically shaped underside 14 that contacts a complementary shaped depression 16 in component 6 as nut 20 is tightened onto bolt 4. Thus, not only does the spherically shaped underside 14 of pressure ring 22 not limit relative displacement of bolt 4 relative to circumferential flange 29, but the spherically shaped underside 14 actually maximizes compression of component 6, not minimizes it. Therefore, the Goiny reference does not disclose: “a compressible substrate joined between the standoff portion and the head of the externally threaded fastener, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit compression of the substrate between the head of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer.”

The McKinlay reference fails to obviate the deficiencies of the Goiny reference. Indeed, the bolt 24 of the McKinlay reference physically drives itself into the material 16 as it is fastened. *See* McKinlay, Fig. 2-3. As the bolt is tightened, head 18 would abut directly against material 16 thereby compressing material 16. Therefore, the cited references, either alone or in combination, do not teach, suggest, or disclose all of the

recited features of amended claim 27. Accordingly, amended independent claim 27 is patentable over the Goiny and McKinlay references. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of amended independent claim 27 are respectfully requested.

Attachments

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the drawings and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. A. Graham', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
a stemmed washer having a washer portion, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion and ~~extending therefrom~~ configured to extend substantially through material of a defined thickness, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion; and
an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion.

7. (Twice Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
a threaded nut having a lower peripheral flange; and
a base having a washer portion, a standoff portion extending from the washer portion, and a retaining skirt portion extending integrally from the washer portion and capturing the peripheral flange of the threaded nut to retain the threaded nut rotatably in assembly with the base, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit displacement of a threaded fastener securable to the threaded nut relative to the washer portion.

13. (Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
an internally threaded fastener adapted to engage an externally threaded fastener;
and
a base having a washer portion, a standoff portion adapted to extend ~~extending~~ from the washer portion such that the standoff portion extends substantially through material of a defined thickness to limit displacement of the externally threaded fastener relative to the washer portion, and a retaining skirt portion extending integrally from the washer portion and capturing the fastener rotatably in assembly with the base.

26. (Twice Amended) A fastener kit comprising:
a stemmed washer having a washer portion, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion;
an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion; and
an externally threaded fastener which mates with the internally threaded fastener,
wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit relative displacement of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer to minimize compression of a material disposed therebetween .

27. (Twice Amended) A fastened joint comprising:
a stemmed washer having a washer portion, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion;
an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion;
an externally threaded fastener which mates with the internally threaded fastener, the externally threaded fastener including a head; and
a compressible substrate joined between the standoff portion and the head of the externally threaded fastener, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit compression of the substrate between the head of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer.